

THEME 2: DESIGN NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT TO BE MORE ATTRACTIVE TO PEOPLE WHO WANT TO LIVE IN AN URBAN RATHER THAN A RURAL SETTING



Newer Evansville neighborhoods on east & west side. Characterized by similar building styles, all single-family residential uses, minimal landscaping, and limited pedestrian amenities.

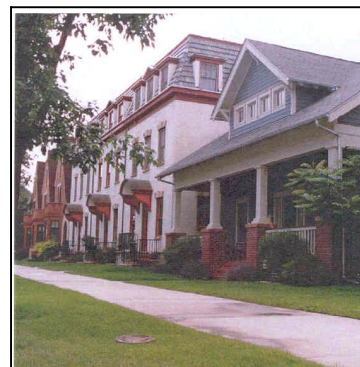
The City of Evansville is a unique community that has the potential to offer a walkable mix of uses that will attract residents to the area and showcase the City's small-town charm. Recent development has not reflected these priorities. The City offers a neighborhood setting that is different from nearby towns. Town development is on larger lots in areas with rolling topography. City development is more compact, walkable, neighborhood-based using available water and sewer infrastructure. These different environments offer buyers a choice by providing distinct areas for living.

There are two guiding approaches recommended for future development in Evansville: New Urbanism (refer to Theme 3 for more information) and Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND). The comprehensive planning law defines TND 1 to mean compact, mixed-use neighborhood where residential, commercial and civic buildings are in close proximity to each other. TND is a planning concept based on the

principles of new urbanism to promote traditional small cities and villages. TND is found in the older parts of Wisconsin's cities and villages. Principles of TND include:

- **Compact.** TND areas have a higher density than traditional single-family subdivision (i.e. duplexes, apartments, as well as single family homes on smaller lots). Compact development also means that the developed area is designed for human scale, not always the automobile. This includes being sensitive to walking distances, heights of buildings, design of streetlights, signs, sidewalks and other features. Compact development includes parks, public buildings, and retail development within a close proximity. These features serve as destination points for surrounding residential areas in the immediate vicinity (1/2 mile or less).
- **Mixed Use.** TND includes a mixture of land uses. This means that nonresidential land uses, such as commercial areas, are mixed with residential development. Mixing uses helps promote walking throughout the community. Mixing land uses can also broaden the tax base. Furthermore, mixed uses can promote different means of transportation (walking, bicycling, automobiles).

Mixed use also means promoting varied housing types and sizes to accommodate households of all ages, sizes and incomes. This translates into varying lot sizes and allowing varied types of housing such as attached single-family



¹ Model Traditional Neighborhood Development Ordinance, UW-Extension, 2000

residences, town homes, duplexes, and housing for seniors. Mixed use may also mean that residential uses are provided above or in the same building as commercial uses.

- **Street Patterns, Sidewalks, and Bikeways.** TND provides for access through an interconnected network of streets, which facilitate walking, bicycling and driving.
- **Cultural and Environmental Sensitivity and Design.** TND can foster a sense of community identity. The design of buildings and their placement receives special attention. Provision of adequate open spaces, use of indigenous vegetation and the use of environmentally responsive storm water management systems are equally important.



TND Community - Middleton Hills, WI

Using the principals of TND and New Urbanism as a guide, the following strategy is recommended for housing development in Evansville. It is anticipated that developments employing these traits would be approved through the use of Planned Unit Development Zoning or creation of a new zoning district for traditional neighborhood development.

- A variety of lot sizes ranging from 6,000 to 10,000 square feet with an abundance of two-story single-family homes of different sizes.
- Larger public spaces vs. individual yards in areas with smaller lots.
- Buildings with front doors and porches, not garages, facing the street frontage. This approach puts “eyes on the street” as a means to promote safety and a sense of community.
- A mix of detailed buildings that reflect the historic character of the community.
- Landscaping, including terrace trees, in front yards.
- Sidewalks and trails in neighborhoods to promote walkability.
- Housing for life – providing a mix of single-family, multiple-family (that also share characteristics of single family – balcony’s, bays, porches, detailed architecture, rear parking, front door oriented toward the street), and senior housing in close proximity.
- On street parking for single family and multiple family units.



Examples of desired multiple-family housing in New Urbanism Communities Across the U.S.

New Urbansim and TND approaches can work harmoniously to provide profitable new development patterns that respect the natural setting and promote a high quality of living. Together, these approaches to development combat harmful sprawling practices. Urban sprawl (e.g. scattered, low density, separation of uses, unconnected development) encourages a sedentary lifestyle where residents are forced to drive to destinations. An increasingly sedentary lifestyle is one reason why heart disease, obesity and stroke have increased in American Society. Urban

sprawl is facilitated in large part by Euclidean zoning, traditional subdivision standards, and poor street connectivity practices that have become commonplace over the past 30 years. These factors are now recognized as hindrances to communities' efforts to create healthy, walkable urban neighborhoods. These practices result in isolated, single-use subdivisions that have limited direct street or pedestrian connections to nearby schools, shopping or other destinations.

By embracing this theme, Evansville will enhance its livability and provide a distinctive choice for homebuyers looking for a quality of life that can only be found in its small-town setting.

THEME 3: IMPROVE MOBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OPTIONS AVAILABLE WITHIN A COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK.²

In the mid-1990s, public health experts began to examine the extent to which the built environment can either help or hinder the public's ability to become and stay healthy. These experts recognized that many of the community planning and design tools used to implement "smart growth" objectives – bicycle and pedestrian planning, mixing land uses, broadening transportation options, and encouraging compact form – may also be creating communities where people could be physically active on a regular basis. This theme recognizes the importance of providing alternative transportation choices (e.g. walking, cycling, transit) as a means to promote a healthy and vibrant Evansville.

There are several things Evansville can do to become a healthy community with neighborhoods where residents have more opportunity to be active and use alternative transportation choices. This plan seeks to define those approaches through New Urbanism, which includes or are consistent with, among other things, the following practices:

- Increasing development densities to provide compact, walkable neighborhoods;
- Requiring sidewalks and trails in new developments;
- Retrofitting already developed areas with sidewalks, trails, and bike paths;
- Instituting traffic calming measures;
- Linking open spaces; and
- Requiring street connectivity.



New Urbanism Estate Homes Located Across from a Park in North Carolina

New Urbanism is an international planning movement to reform the design of the built environment. Its goals are to raise the quality of life and standard of living by creating better places to live. New Urbanism is the revival of the lost art of place making, not just developing. The seven primary principles of New Urbanism are highlighted on the next page along with their relationship to the City of Evansville.

² Section includes excerpts from Zoning Practice, Issue No. 6: Physical Activity, June 2004.

PRINCIPLES

1. Walkability

Most things are within a 10-minute walk (1/4 mi). Pedestrian friendly street design that encourages a greater use of bicycles, rollerblades, scooters, and walking as daily transportation

2. Connectivity

An interconnected network of grid Streets

3. Mixed Uses

4. Mixed Housing Types

5. Quality Architecture & Design

Emphasis on beauty, aesthetics, human comfort, and creating a sense of place

6. Traditional Neighborhood Structure

Discernable center and edge
Public space at center

7. Sustainability

Energy efficient design.
More walking less driving.

RELATIONSHIP TO EVANSVILLE

The layout of the older portions of the City is where walkability is best. Destinations (e.g. schools, parks, shopping) are concentrated in this area. The City has sidewalks throughout the community to make walking a safe choice. Newer neighborhoods have not included destinations for pedestrians.

As is discussed earlier in this Chapter and in the Transportation Element, connectivity is something that needs to be improved in Evansville's newer developments. Connectivity can be improved by providing additional roadway connections and also pedestrian and cycling connections through trails and sidewalks between developments.

The City has a wonderful array of different land uses in the historic areas of the community. Newer developments have tended to segregate uses in accordance with Euclidian zoning principals.

The City has an opportunity to improve its balance of housing types to provide quality living choices, including condominiums, townhomes, apartments and the like. These structures promote affordability and walkability. Moreover, these types of developments allow the City to capitalize on its infrastructure (e.g. water and sewer).

There are limited design requirements for development in Evansville. The requirements that do exist in the Zoning Code are related to setbacks, building height, and density requirements. At the same time, Evansville has one of the richest historic pallets in the State from which to draw upon to promote quality architecture and design.

The older areas of the City follow this pattern with the centrally located downtown, and visible City Hall, library, and churches.

There is a growing interest in energy efficiency in Evansville. This is seen in the innovative technologies used at the High School and also in the comments from the building community during the development of this plan.

The Wisconsin Energy Star Program has guidelines that can be used as a standard for new housing construction and to improve energy efficiency in older homes. Likewise, through planning, the City can promote development patterns and amenities that encourage walking and cycling as viable transportation alternatives to driving.

By employing a New Urbanist philosophy, Evansville can successfully encourage alternative transportation choices and make the street network safer and more efficient. Tools (e.g. traffic calming, trail development, etc.) to promote this transportation theme are highlighted in this chapter.